Volume 19 No. 12

April 2009

WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

The Iraq Memorial to Life on display at Heritage Park. (Photo by Robert Whitlock)

The Iraq Memorial to Life begins

by Douglas & Jody Mackey

Volunteers from this and other countries created the thirty five hundred markers placed in the first installation of the Iraq Memorial to Life. Then on Friday morning of March 20, two dozen Olympia-area people built the Memorial in Heritage Park.

The idea for the Memorial grew out of a need to honor and recognize the hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths that resulted from hostilities initiated by the US-led invasion of Iraq six years ago. No one will ever know how many people have died. Yet most scientifically based calculations estimate that over a million people have been killed as a result of the US government's actions beginning March 19, 2003.

It's hard to understand

The death occurring in Iraq arises from a confounding situation. It is hard to understand how so many questions can remain unanswered.

How could 20 million people all over the world go unheeded as they took to the streets to prevent the invasion – to say "No to War?"

How could we watch the smoke rising up out of Baghdad and not find a way to stop it?

How could another 81 civilian deaths be recorded during the week of the sixth anniversary of the attack?

A memorial to individuals

The markers in the memorial are made for individuals. The information used to make the markers is available at the IMtL website and originates from the iraqbodycount.org data. This organization, Iraq Body Count (IBC), has been keeping records of the documented deaths since the beginning of the 'war.' The IBC totals are now between 91,333–99,721 documented civilian deaths (March 27, 2009). The IBC is very candid about their data, about its limitations, and why the data continues to be collected.

The Memorial opening ceremony was held on March 20 and the daylong event included building the memorial, a walking meditation, the dedication, and a candlelight vigil. During the meditative walk to the corners of the memorial, the group paused to scan the skyline where the Deschutes River meets Budd Bay at Capital Lake; everything within view, all of the hillsides the valley and the water, would have had to be covered with memorial markers in order to honor all of the civilians killed.

On Saturday, memorial visitors were greeted by a warm sun as they walked the aisles and aisles of markers next to Capital Lake. Several hundred people visited the memorial during the two-day event with a wide range of responses.

Two US war veterans walked the memorial with their wives, nervously looking for a marker that may have been for a person they shot while serving in Iraq. They knew the date that would be on the marker for which they were looking. Not finding it, they kept moving, searching.

Several children returned to the memorial on Saturday to show their parents the markers of children that were the same age and younger than they were.

The Memorial closed with a ceremony where four new markers were placed for people killed in Iraq on March 19 – just two days prior: a husband and wife, a city mayor, and a 12-year old girl – all civilian victims in the continuing tragedy. The Iraq Memorial to life was taken down on March 21 and will begin traveling to other cities around the country before arriving in Washington, DC in the not too distant future.

Your help is needed. Please make a marker for one of the civilians killed—or make several markers for a group that died in an incident. You may select markers at: www.iraqmemorialtolife.org where you will receive instructions on where to send them so they will be included in the next installation of the memorial.

For more information about the Iraq Memorial to Life, to make markers, or to donate to the project please call (360) 485-3764, or email *peace@iraqmemorialtolife.org*.

Coffee Strong: Listening to the GI Voice at Fort Lewis

By Zoltan Grossman

The early morning scene could be at any one of the innumerable coffeehouses in the Pacific Northwest. Two baristas serve steaming mugs of espresso, while their coworker produces graphics on a computer. Another employee plays Rachmaninoff on the piano. Customers are sipping their coffee as they read the morning newspaper.

Yet at second glance, both baristas are Iraq War veterans wearing t-shirts against the war. One served in Iraq as an Army machine gunner, and the other as Marine machine gunner. The guy on the computer was an Army counterintelligence agent in Mosul, and the guy playing the piano was a private first class in the Army National Guard. Most of the customers are wearing khaki fatigues, and reading about their imminent deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan.

This is COFFEE STRONG, a new G.I. coffeehouse just outside the gates of Fort Lewis, the largest Army base on the West Coast. It is located in Lakewood, Washington, between Olympia and Tacoma. The coffeehouse—whose capitalized name spoofs the recruitment slogan "ARMY STRONG"—was opened on Election Day 2008 by G.I. Voice, a local veteran-led nonprofit project. It is only the second G.I. rights coffeehouse to open in the country since the Vietnam War; others have opened in New York, Texas, and Virginia.

COFFEE STRONG is modeled after the G.I. coffeehouse movement from the 1960s, as described in the book *Soldiers in Revolt*, and the documentary *Sir! No Sir!* But G.I. Voice is using 21st-century outreach tools to connect with soldiers and their families, such as computers for soldiers to access the Internet without Army interference. The historic project also started a website at *www.GIVoice.org*, and is planning a radio webstream to connect with military personnel using music and culture.

(Photo by Robert Whitlock)

The goal of the G.I. coffeehouse is to provide soldiers, their families and recent vets a place away from the base where they can learn about resources available to them, meet with G.I. rights counselors, and access alternative information. It holds weekly movie nights, and hosts speakers, hiphop, punk and folk concerts, and other events. The response from soldiers visiting the coffeehouse has so far been overwhelmingly positive.

G.I. Voice is independent of any other organizations or political parties, as an autonomous expression of the community of soldiers, veterans and their families adversely affected by the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. Anti-war veterans often feel unrepresented both by mainstream veterans' groups that support the wars, and peace groups that do not understand the experiences and grievances of soldiers. Through G.I. Voice, they are organizing among themselves to speak for themselves, and to provide servicemembers and their families with a place to freely express themselves.

G.I. Voice addresses issues of concern to soldiers--such as repeated "Stop-Loss" deployments to war zones, command abuse, repression of constitutional rights, sexual harassment and rape, health and safety conditions, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Yet the purpose of G.I. Voice is not to reform the military into a more effective fighting machine. Instead, the group maintains that once servicemembers are actively struggling with their command around issues of working conditions, they will start to see the connections between the occupation of other countries and their own oppression in the United States.

G.I. Voice Director Seth Manzel spent a year deployed in Iraq in 2004, assigned to the 1st Stryker Brigade from Fort Lewis. He wrote in *Works in Progress*, "For soldiers and their families to engage in resistance requires them to stand up for soldiers' rights. The mere act of standing up for one's rights in the Army is enough to slow down a unit's deployment times. The Army could not function if it delivered on all its promises to soldiers and their families. In this way a moderate message (stand up for G.I. rights) could have a radical effect on the military. We don't need to indoctrinate people in the military. If we inform them of their rights, they will come to anti-war conclusions on their own."

Fort Lewis spokesman Joe Kubistek said the Army is aware of the coffeehouse, but acknowledges that since it is a legal business, the Army will not restrict soldiers from going there. Kubistek added, "We don't have a position on the political views of an outside individual." Manzel jokes that "if they blacklisted us, it would be the best publicity we could get." He asserts that G.I. Voice does not want to push its political views on customers, saying "We're anti-war, but we're not 'in your face' about it."

Perhaps nowhere else in the country is there such a stark juxtaposition between a large military base community and large progressive anti-war communities, in nearby Olympia and Tacoma. In this area, we see and hear the Iraq and Afghanistan wars

▸ **COFFEE STRONG** continues on page 3

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a free, volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions
Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress*, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to *olywip@gmail.com*. Send event announcements to *wipannouncements@gmail.com*.

Or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

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The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

> WIP *will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by* WIP *to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but* WIP *reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

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We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues
Some back issues are available in the Timberland Library system. *Works In Progress* is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS

TCTV Channel 22
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Many regularly scheduled programs likely to be of interest to people seeking information and insight from a progressive viewpoint in our area, as well as single programs documenting local events. From ***Democracy Now!*** to ***Washington Federation of State Employees***, TCTV has something for the public of Thurston County to choose from. For a complete schedule visit *www.tctv.net*.

POWER Outage

Monday, April 6, 5:30–8:00 pm
First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE

Parents Organizing For Welfare and Economic Rights (POWER) Outage is the first Monday of every month. Bring the kids, we have childcare, and let us know if you need help getting there. This month, on April 6, we will be silkscreening Super Mom shirts in time for Mother's Day. Come and help and take one home for free!

POWER holds volunteer meetings every Wednesday at 1:30 at our office in the Payne Room of the First Christian Church, 701 Franklin St SE Olympia, WA 98501.

Call us for information about your rights or how you can get involved at 360-352-9716, toll free 866-343-9716 or email *welfarerights@riseup.net*. Visit *www.oly-wa.us/power* or *www.myspace.com/parentsorganizing*.

Female Faces of War: the Untold Story—Mothers, Sisters, Soldiers.

Tuesday April 7. ***Daytime Event***—noon, The Evergreen State College, SEM 2 D1105. ***Evening Event***—7 pm
St. John's Episcopal Church, 19th and Capitol Way S.

A 50 min. documentary about the effects of the occupation of Iraq on women. In addition to the already astounding $12 billion spent each month in its 6th year of engagement, women are paying an extraordinary price. After film screening, **Moni T. Law** will answer questions about the making of the film and Iraqi refugee advocate **Zahra Al Kabi** will speak about the **Apology & Forgiveness Campaign for the Iraqi People**—*saverefugees.org*. Attendees will have an opportunity to fill out apology postcards to be delivered to Iraq.

Sponsored by the Mideast Solidarity Committee and Women's Resource Center, (360) 867-6724.

NAFTA Turns 15: Free trade, food security and migration in Mexico.

Friday, April 10, 7 pm at St John's Episcopal Church 19th Avenue and Capital Way S., Olympia

Take a deeper look at the effects of NAFTA, including resistance to genetically modified (GMO) corn, the impact of migration on sending communities, and the struggle for food security in Oaxaca's indigenous communities. **Baldemar Mendoza Jiménez** works with groups of women and men on themes related to organic agriculture, traditional agriculture, making rapidly-maturing organic fertilizer, and making mineral mixtures for the prevention of crop damage by insects or diseases. Professional translation (English–Spanish) provided and light refreshments will be available.

This event is co-sponsored by Witness for Peace Northwest, OUUC Social Justice Committee, and Bridges Not Walls. For more information contact Shelley Spalding at (360)427-7444.

Peak oil program

Monday, April 13, 7 PM. MIXX 96 Meeting Room, State and Washington, Olympia

Screening of the documentary ***PEAK OIL: Imposed by Nature*** with a facilitated discussion on what global oil decline might mean for us will follow. This free event is sponsored by **Olympia Climate Action**. Contact Jack Zeiger (360)943-5112 for more information.

Annual tax day protest

Wednesday, April 15, All Day,
Downtown Post Office, 9th & Jefferson, Olympia

Please join us at the main post office in downtown Olympia for our annual protest vigil against the self-destructive madness of paying for US wars, occupations and continued imperialism around the globe. Folks will be there much of the day, from 10 am till we run out of informative flyers to give to the grumbling, Tax Day procrastinators! Drop-by anytime you can. The biggest onslaught of parking lot traffic comes between 4 pm and midnight. Please bring an appropriate sign (or use one of ours) and help distribute info reminding our fellow citizens of this nation's shameful culpabilities & skewed priorities. Active representatives of the Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace, Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation www.olyfor.org, and others will be present. Be there and help demand some real change in our national spending.

Printing a kajillion fliers costs a pretty penny. If you want to step up & help pay for this expense (bless you!), please contact: *scottyoos@hotmail.com*, *glen@olywa.net*, or *pattyimani@hotmail.com*. Visit *www.nwtrcc.org* and *www.warresisters.org/wtr.htm* for background info on the war tax resisters' movement.

How to stay in school and survive financially as a single parent

Wed., April 22, 5 PM, The Evergreen State College

POWER will be holding a special workshop for current or prospective student parents. We will have a panel of experts - single parents who are in school or who have graduated. Everyone welcome. Childcare and dinner provided.

Celebrate the past, plant the future

Saturday, May 2, 9 AM to 1 PM

Olympia's urban forest is diverse, made up of very young trees, as well as 130-year-old landmark trees. Join ISA Certified Arborists Kevin McFarland of Sound Urban Forestry and Michael Moore of Moore Trees & Co., for a free half-day workshop to learn the fascinating art of caring for both very young and very old trees. This class will be mainly outdoors, so dress appropriately. No seating will be available for the outdoor portion, so please bring a chair if needed.

The class begins at the Smith Building, 837 7th Ave SE, in Olympia, and ends at the First United Methodist Church parking lot at 1224 Legion Way SE, Olympia.

Grandmothers Counsel the World at The Evergreen State College

Saturday, May 2 through Tuesday, May 8, The Evergreen State College, Olympia and Tacoma Campus

The **International Council of Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers** was formed almost five years ago out of a deep concern for "the unprecedented destruction of our Mother Earth and the destruction of indigenous ways of life." The Council, which includes spiritual leaders from across the world, assembles to pray, share ancestral wisdom and counsel the world from multiple perspectives of distinctive cultures.

Sponsored by Evergreen's Willi Unsoeld Seminar Series, Diversity Series and the Longhouse Educational Center. For information regarding the series of events visit *www.evergreen.edu*.

The new narrative: Local voices for a global future

Friday, May 15, 5:30-6:30PM -Meet and Eat, 6:30-9:30 Films, Presentation and Conversation, Capitol Theater, 206 5th Ave SE, Olympia, Free

Short documentary films on individuals and organizations from many countries working towards sustainability, peace and social justice will be screen. Speakers include **Orland Bishop**—a pioneering community organizer, founder and director of ShadeTree Multicultural Foundation in Los Angeles about the challenges urban communities face worldwide and the solutions he has found combining new ideas and traditional knowledge—and filmmaker **Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee**.

Sponsored by the **Global Oneness Project**. For additional information contact call 1-877-539-3456 (FILM), email *events@globalonenessproject.org* or visit *www.globalonenessproject.org*.

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▸ **COFFEE STRONG** continued from page 1

almost every day. It is impossible to miss hearing the howitzer fire booming on the Fort Lewis artillery range, seeing the giant C-17 transport planes from Baghdad or Bagram landing at McChord Air Force Base, or overlooking the PTSD exhibited in local car accidents, robberies, bar brawls, domestic abuse, and sexual assaults.

The Iraq War has increased the polarization between the local communities, but also increased opportunities to work together—since both communities actually care that there's a war going on. Pro-war and anti-war demonstrators have clashed on the Interstate-5 overpass at Exit 122, which the Lakewood City Council renamed "Freedom Bridge" to honor the pro-war group's presence. The overpass and the gates of Fort Lewis (and of the Army National Guard's Camp Murray) are only a few hundreds yards from the G.I. coffeehouse, on Union Avenue behind the Subway franchise.

Over the past two years, large direct actions at the Ports of Olympia and Tacoma have protested the movement of Stryker armored vehicles to and from Iraq. Manzel's concern is that soldiers understand the reasons for these actions, and that anti-war protesters understand that G.I.s are not their enemy. He says of the new G.I. coffeehouses, "I think this is going to be a real link between the peace movement and soldiers on the bases that these are outside of." Port protesters have noticed some Stryker soldiers flashing peace signs when their officers are not watching, even if a smaller number of soldiers have instead flashed "half a peace sign."

Fort Lewis has become a national center of G.I. dissent against the Iraq War, as it was during the Vietnam War. Lieutenant Ehren Watada was tried in February 2007 for being the first commissioned officer to refuse to deploy to Iraq. Peace activists staged a "Citizens' Hearing" tribunal to present Watada's case that the war is illegal. (His court martial ended in a mistrial, and has since won most of his legal case, but the Army has still not allowed him to resign his commission.) Other Army refusers, such as Sgt. Kevin Benderman and Spc. Suzanne Swift, have been jailed for a time in the harsh Fort Lewis stockade. G.I. Voice recently hosted a training of active-duty members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) who are organizing within the armed forces rather than seeking to leave the military.

G.I. Voice points to a new relationship between the growing G.I. movement and the larger civilian anti-war movement. Peace groups can support and do outreach to GIs, working with Iraq War veterans who best understand best how to communicate with the younger military generation. Peace activists could also educate themselves about issues of concern to soldiers, to open respectful dialogue with G.I.s and their families, as a step to working together. The G.I. Rights Hotline (800-394-9544) is a first stop for military personnel and families wanting to explore their options.

Fort Lewis is scheduled to deploy 10,000 more troops later this year, including three Stryker Brigades to Iraq and Afghanistan, making this a critical period for G.I. organizing in the area. The few other G.I. coffeehouses in the country have struggled to open their doors or to keep them open. Although COFFEE STRONG has an advantageous location next to the region's busiest fast-food joints, it has competition from the Starbucks on post.

Any kind of support would help the non-profit G.I. coffeehouse stay open as a "safe space" for soldiers and their families. For more information, contact G.I. Voice, P.O. Box 99404, Lakewood WA 98496, or on-line at *www.GIVoice.org* or *www.CoffeeStrong.com*. (Tax-deductible contributions can be made on-line, or with checks made out to "Seattle Draft & Military Counseling Center" or "SDMCC").

As the German poet-playwright Bertolt Brecht wrote:

> *General, your tank is a powerful vehicle.*
> *It smashes down forests and crushes men.*
> *But it has one defect:*
> *It needs a driver....*
> *General, man is very useful.*
> *He can fly and he can kill.*
> *But he has one defect:*
> *He can think.*

Zoltan Grossman is a member of the faculty in geography at The Evergreen State College and a longtime peace and justice organizer. He is a civilian board member of G.I. Voice (givoice.org), and co-organized the Citizens' Hearing on the Legality of US Actions in Iraq (wartribunal.net). He can be reached at grossmaz@evergreen.edu or on his website at academic.evergreen.edu/g/grossmaz. This article was previously published in CounterPunch and Znet.

RAD LIBS: Olympia rezone update—Isthmus over yet?

belabored pun using the word "Isthmus"

by Janet Blanding

Standing room only—again

Rezone opponents, outnumbering rezone advocates 81 (large number) to 23 (small number) once again crowded the recent Committee hearing for ESSB 5800 (public event), another standing room only occasion. Despite the continued display of public opposition to the rezone of the isthmus, democracy was once again thwarted when Committee Chair Geoff Simpson refused to let the committee vote (democracy-thwarting event).

Ralph Munro (former Secy of State) (prominent citizen), Gail Frink Schulz (Behind the Badge) (prominent citizen), former Olympia Mayor Bob Jacobs (prominent citizen), and Zena Hartung, League of Women Voters (prominent citizen), among others, testified on behalf of passing the bill (gerund), which would preserve the height limit of 35 feet on the isthmus, and thus enable the preservation of the views from the Capitol Campus. Local politician Representative Brendan Williams (elected official who received large campaign contribution from Triway) stared into his laptop throughout the hearing, apparently ignoring the testimony.

Oly2012 Steering Committee member Peter Stroble (person who denies being on Triway's payroll) once again claimed to represent a silent majority * (dubious constituency) of Olympia citizens, as he asserted that it would be financially (adverb) and environmentally (adverb) irresponsible to oppose the construction of luxury condos in downtown Olympia. Using the same arguments, Curt Smelser (person who admits to being on Triway's payroll) testified for several minutes before divulging that he was employed by Triway Enterprises, the developer who hopes to build condominiums on the isthmus.

City manager Steve Hall triggered widespread eye-rolling (negative reaction) and groaning (negative reaction) in the audience when he asserted that city government had paid attention to public opinion on this issue (preposterous assertion).

Friends of the Waterfront still strong

A Friends of the Waterfront meeting on March 27 (recent date) was as crowded as ever, as rezone opponents vowed to continue the struggle to preserve the views and access to the waterfront.

Friends of the Water front stalwart Sue Lean (proper noun) shared recently discovered information about a letter written by John Olmsted to Governor (significant but obscure fact discovered in public record document) Hay in 1912 about the importance of the view; unfortunately, this compelling evidence was ignored by elected officials. Undeterred by recent setbacks, the FOTW committed to opposing the rezone by urging House reps to vote on 5800 (action) and writing to the Dept. of Ecology (action).

The recent "compromise" proposal by Mayor Doug Mah (politician who received donation from Triway) that would beautify the area near Triway's parcels at taxpayer expense (fallacious compromise details) was briefly discussed.

Call to action

Don't despair! Although the stifling of democracy over this issue has become almost predictable, it would still be a good idea to contact House reps encouraging a vote on ESSB 5800 (action that should work if this was really a democracy) and express your concerns to the Dept. of Ecology (another possible recourse for citizens in a real democracy that will probably be ignored).

See next month's issue of *Works In Progress* for an isthmus update article very similar to this one.

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In honor of Lovelle Mixon: Cheering those who fire back

by Wally Cuddeford

The full list of sources and endnotes will accompany the online version at www.olywip.org.

On Saturday, March 21, Lovelle Mixon, a 26 year-old Black man, was pulled over by two Oakland police officers while driving through downtown. Mixon had stopped meeting with his parole officer a month before, and a warrant had been issued for his arrest. What happened next is still the subject of speculation, but the result was both the officers were shot and mortally wounded, and Mixon had disappeared. Later that day, the police learned Mixon was hiding in a nearby apartment. A SWAT team entered the apartment, and Mixon was killed in the gunfire, but not before two more officers were also killed.

The response seen most often in the press tells of a "community in mourning." Oakland police spokesperson Jeff Thomason called the shootings "probably one of the worst incidents [...] in the history of the Oakland police department." Extensive coverage is given to the massive funeral service, where thousands of police officers and government officials from around the country gathered to pay their respects to the slain officers and their families. Meanwhile, some "community leaders" suggest that what's needed now is a "healing of the rifts" between the community and the police. In that spirit, non-profit director Jakada Imani asked of the relationship between the community and the police, "How do we build that trust?"

> Why would anyone *cheer* after hearing of the deaths of four people they never met?

But there was another common response, specifically documented as openly expressed by hundreds of individuals, and thus likely shared by many thousands more openly (if not millions privately). It was the response of those, including me, whose first reaction was "Finally! It's about damn time someone fired *back!*"

This response was honest in its immediacy. As is well documented, the crowd who witnessed the first shootings taunted the officers as they lay dying. This response, of excitement as opposed to horror, was echoed over and over again. The on-scene reporter for the local news was hounded by people in the background shouting "Fuck the police!" As officers gathered at the hospital, people shouted at them "This is payback for Oscar Grant!" And there are reports from across the country that large crowds, such as at a music festival in Austin, when they were told of what happened, erupted in cheers.

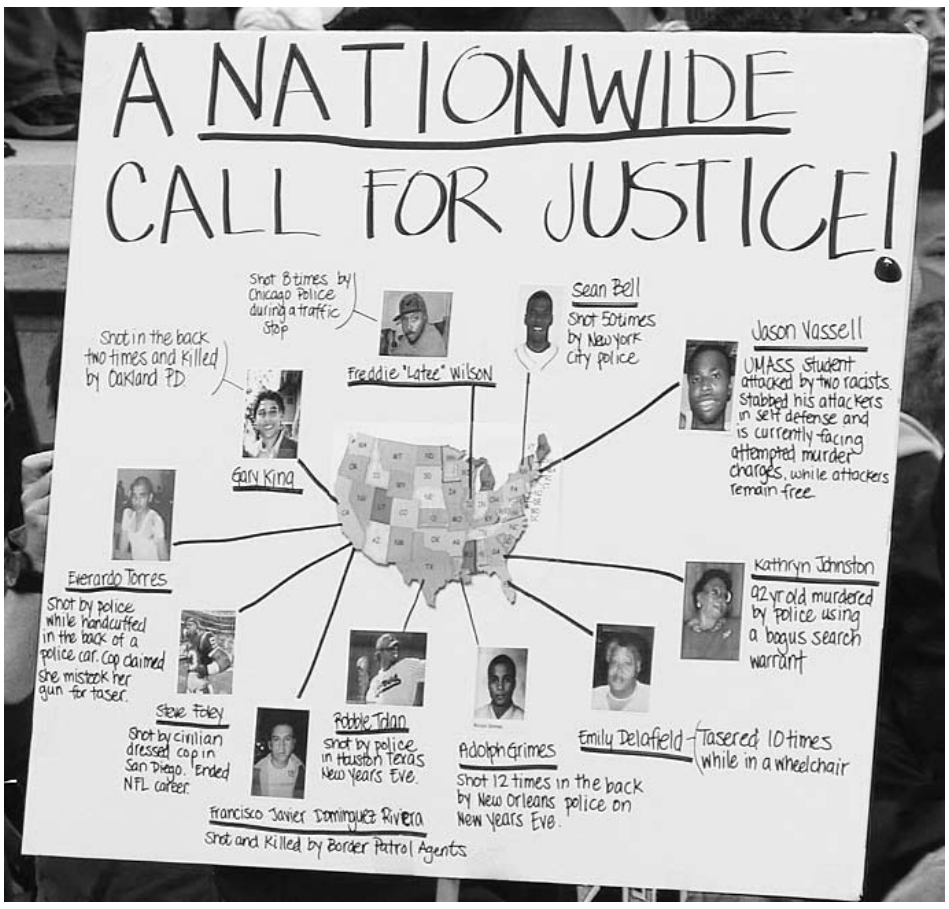
Those who cheered, or shouted "Payback!", or like me said "Finally!", needed no explanation. Our reactions were immediate. We understood. But there are many people who, while not sharing our excitement, have been brave enough to examine the implications of these cheers, and to honestly (and I mean *honestly*) ask the question "Why?" Indeed, that's a good question. Why would anyone *cheer* after hearing of the deaths of four people they never met? The answer to this question lies in what exactly it is that we understood.

Despite the calls by "community leaders" to "heal the rifts" between the community and the police, the actual state of community / police relations in poor communities of color, and to a smaller degree throughout the country, is war. No matter how much the mainstream media wants to cast the undeniable manifestations of this war as random, senseless aberrations (an *ongoing series* of aberrations, no less!), the truth of this war is not lost on the people embroiled within it. It's as real to them as if real bullets are actually flying, because they actually are.

Jose Ramírez-Jiménez and Stephen Edwards here in Olympia, as well as countless unarmed others across the country, are killed in cold blood by police, yet despite the most clear cut cases, the cops who murder them keep going free. This pattern is not lost on us. But while news coverage of police violence is usually defined by murders and beatings – If it bleeds, it leads – the whole scope of everyday uniformed aggression is more important to your average police-weary citizen. Cops detain and harass people, even when they know they've done nothing wrong. This fact is not lost on us. Officers can, and do, lie to cover their reckless behavior and to secure convictions. This fact is not lost on us. But most importantly, we have no real legal recourse. There is no true accountability for the police in any of this, ever, and that fact is *certainly* not lost on us.

Given that context, let's take a closer look at the events of March 21. There's not a lot to analyze about the events at the traffic stop, since very little has been revealed about what exactly happened. All we know is Mixon was minding his own business, was pulled over, shots were fired, and the bystanders who witnessed everything cheered the cops' deaths.

The shootout at the apartment, however, was entirely different. Standard procedure for when the police have someone in hiding requires that non-violent resolutions be sought first, and that their target be communicated to and given the opportunity to surrender, unless an imminent danger to others is clear. This procedure is both for the police's own safety, and to protect an individual's constitutional right to due process, as the law does not grant the police any right to inordinately endanger anyone on the basis of suspected guilt. No imminent public danger was clear from Mixon, surrounded and hiding in his apartment. And though police have claimed they made "repeated attempts to communicate" with Mixon, reports have surfaced indicating his younger sister was in the apartment, oblivious to his presence or to the police siege, and that she was injured in the leg with a flash grenade when the police stormed in. These accounts demonstrate that no attempt at communication was actually made. The SWAT team stormed in, fully aware they were acting against regulations, eager to kill the man they wanted dead. The police were every bit the aggressors at the apartment, regardless of how incompetently they carried out their mission (or how expertly Mixon defended himself). Given the lethal nature of the attack, Mixon's choice to fire back, at the apartment, was in self-defense.


A NATIONWIDE CALL FOR JUSTICE!
Shot 8 times by Chicago Police during a traffic stop
Sean Bell
Shot 50 times by New York City police
Jason Vassell
UMASS student attacked by two racists. Stabbed his attackers in self defense and is currently facing attempted murder charges, while attackers remain free.
Shot in the back two times and killed by Oakland PD
Freddie "Latee" Wilson
Gary King
Everardo Torres
Shot by police while handcuffed in the back of a police car. Cop claimed she mistook her gun for taser.
Kathryn Johnston
92 yr old murdered by police using a bogus search warrant
Steve Foley
Shot by civilian dressed cop in San Diego. Ended NFL career.
Robbie Tolan
Shot by police in Houston Texas New Years Eve.
Adolph Grimes
Shot 12 times in the back by New Orleans police on New Years Eve.
Emily Delafield
Tasered 10 times while in a wheelchair
Francisco Javier Dominguez Rivera
Shot and Killed by Border Patrol Agents

Photos above and below: Demonstrators in Oakland protest the police killing of Oscar Grant, who was unarmed and prostrate when he was shot. Names and faces of other people of color who were victims of police violence are displayed. Jan. 14, 2009.

These events, however, seem to bear little relation to the reporting of the corporate-owned media. Generally, the coverage consists of calling the events a "shooting spree," despite that the apartment killings were in self-defense, and the brief shootout at the traffic stop hardly qualifies as a "spree." These misleading characterizations are supplemented with endless photos of police crying interspersed with mug shots and rap sheets of Mixon. When dissected, this "reporting" amounts to nothing more than public relations propaganda for the police, aimed solely at eliciting the desired emotional response from viewers in lieu of answering any of the honest questions people have. The fact that this sort of propagandizing is repeated over and over every time there's a pressing reason to take a good hard look at our police is not lost on us.

> This is not a call for further violence. If anything, this is a wake up call for our mutual situation, which further denial will only exacerbate.

It's also interesting to note the disparity of attention paid to the police and to Mixon. Almost no attention is given to the backgrounds of the officers, except to say they "served their communities," as they say, for X number of years, and leave behind Y number of relatives. Mixon, on the other hand, is now the subject of intense scrutiny, with entire articles devoted just to outlining his incarceration and parole history. Most trumpeted is the report that Mixon has been "connected" to a rape in February. Even his family is being intruded upon, with local corporate news reporting that Mixon's sister is now facing drug possession charges.

How that last bit qualifies as "news" in any way, I do not know. But I do know that one of the most basic ways to manipulate discussion is to turn the focus exclusively onto one party. As long as people are talking about Mixon's criminal record, and debating the likelihood of whether or not he was a rapist, they can't seriously analyze the inarguably more important implications.

While these mischaracterizations and misdirections do satisfy many peoples' thirst for inquiry and obscure the reality of continuous police violence to some degree, they do nothing to actually *change* this reality. This fact is not lost on us. Thus, even if serious analysis is successfully clouded, all that's achieved is a sharper division between many peoples' perception and the reality in which many others live. Such a division can only ensure the events of March 21 will happen again.

The primary allegation levied against Mixon by his critics is based on police claims that he has been "linked" through DNA evidence to a February rape of a 12 year old. The problem with this claim is that we have only the word of the police spokesperson to go on, and many of us believe police claims against people should be subjected to peer review. We have not heard from the forensic examiner investigating the case, and since Mixon is dead, there will never be a trial nor public access to this referenced "DNA evidence." Furthermore, Mixon's family and friends insist Lovelle would never rape anyone, and Mixon's criminal record (including convictions and accusations made before March 21) does not indicate any tendency toward sexual assault.

To the contrary, Mixon's loved ones, and many around the country, have called him a "warrior" and a "hero." Indeed, what he did was incredibly brave. This was no idle whim of his. He specifically made the decision not to go back to their prison, and he was fully prepared to carry through with this decision when the time came, not just logistically, but also mentally and psychologically. He did not seek out confrontation – indeed, by all accounts he spent his final months trying to find a stable job and get on his feet – but when confrontation inevitably found him, he met it like a warrior. Mahatma Gandhi, strict proponent of non-violence that he was, once said, "Though violence is not lawful, when it is offered in self-defence or for the defence of the defenceless, it is an act of bravery far better than cowardly submission." Not only was Mixon brave, but he was also selfless in his final moments. Surely he knew he had chosen to die, and nobody chooses death just to serve their own survival, or out of fear of what any new charges or prison time may do to their life.

▸ **MIXON** continues on following page

▸ **MIXON** continues from previous page

His actions can only be understood in terms of the consequences, which are, given the terms of war between the police and the people, four of his community's enemies are dead, and the rest are put on notice of what the cost of their aggression is. It is to these ends that Mixon selflessly gave his life.

Given his heroism in his final moments, as well as the significance of this rare form of retribution, Lovelle Mixon's place in history is already cemented. Every time someone fires back, Lovelle Mixon's name will be on everyone's tongue. For many, this puts his actions right up there, in significance if not in magnitude, with those of Nat Turner, with those who participated in the Jewish insurgency in the Warsaw Ghetto, and with the inmates who took over Attica Prison.

Perhaps even more important than Mixon's heroism, however, is that his heroism is not lost on us. People are victimized – not just attacked, but actually made into victims – by this system every day. Yet here was a proud Black man who decided he was through being a victim. "Never again," he told himself. "They've taken so much, but if they're going to take my *life*, I'll take theirs in return." And he meant it, and he carried through with it. When we look at *this* Lovelle Mixon, we see the best parts of ourselves. Knowing Mixon, who was not particularly political, followed through with his convictions as he did, in the face of the single most heavily equipped occupying army this world has ever seen, and in the face of certain death, I and many others have renewed faith in our struggles to resist.

The story of Lovelle Mixon isn't all smiles and raised fists. As many have rightly pointed out, the situation for poor people of color will be worse in the immediate aftermath. This is different from the attempts at mitigation from "community leaders" who suggest we "heal the rift." Rather, this is the genuine concern of community organizers who know police psychology and pathology all too well. Police aggression will worsen in Oakland (and around the country) for some time afterward, as the cops try to reestablish the fear through which they control others. And whenever police retaliate, it's always poor people of color who pay the highest price.

And yet, it's evidently many of those very people, who stand to suffer the most, and who understand the danger, who are cheering the loudest.

I've never lived in Oakland, and I have no interest in playing the role of outside agitator for their situation. But from an analytical standpoint, I suspect, for many people, this is about even more than Mixon. I suspect, on top of all that, this is also about dignity, and about rights. I suspect, for them, this is about the individual human right to defend one's self, one's family, and one's community from their attackers, by whatever means one has at their disposal. I suspect this is about the reclamation, in some small fashion, of this fundamental right, which has been denied to so many for so long. And I think – I *think* – the relevance of this reclamation which Lovelle Mixon's deeds represent is not lost on the people of Oakland.

This is not a call for further violence. If anything, this is a wake up call for our mutual situation, which further denial will only exacerbate. And truth be told, if I had a magic wand that could bring those four cops back to life *and* make them not be cops anymore, I'd do it. But this isn't fantasy, and there are no fantastical solutions. This is the reality of war, a war which the police introduced, and from which it is upon the police to disengage. Given that reality, and given that these officers had every opportunity to know the nuances of their chosen profession, and given that they still chose the side they did, I do not lament their deaths in any way whatsoever. Rather I, along with perhaps millions of others across the country, am cheering that finally, at long last, someone fired *back*.

Wally Cuddeford is an activist, journalist, and lifelong resident of Olympia, Washington. He is also a US Navy veteran.

This article was printed over much debate by the Works in Progress staff.

DU, dioxin, deformities, dimes and deceit

by David W. Griffiths

Part I: Before 1991, when an Iraqi woman gave birth, the first question she was likely to ask her doctor was, "Is it a boy or a girl?" Now, after 18 years of war, both military and economic, after the poisoning of air, water and soil as well as of flesh, blood and genes, after the almost total destruction of Iraq's medical infrastructure, now a new mother's first question is more likely to be, "Is it normal?" Even more alarming, with increasing frequency, the answer is, "No."

According to Tedd Weyman of the Uranium Medical Research Centre in Toronto, Ontario and Dr. Siegwart Horst Guenther, a German doctor who has worked in Iraq for over 40 years, over the last 18 years, since the U.S. first attacked Iraq, there has been a rapid increase in the number and severity of birth defects seen in Iraq's remaining hospitals. Certain types of deformities, many never before seen in Iraq, have become almost common. Children are being born without eyes, without faces, without heads, with organs outside their bodies or missing entirely, with their spines partially or completely exposed or, again, missing entirely. Some, apparently lacking skin, are literally blobs of unrecognizable bloody tissue.

Dr. Guenther and Dr. Asaf Durakovic, a co-founder of the UMRC, say that the sharpest increase in the occurrence of these horrifying deformities has come within the last six years, since the "beginning" of the Iraq War. Geographically speaking, the areas with the highest rates of such deformities are also the areas with the heaviest exposure to depleted uranium. Depleted uranium, or DU, is a byproduct of the nuclear weapons and nuclear energy industries. In short, it is nuclear waste.

However, it is used to "enhance" both munitions and armor because of its extraordinarily high density. Because DU-enhanced rounds are not designed to produce a nuclear reaction, they are not technically "nuclear" weapons, but they do release radioactive fallout. DU has an estimated half-life of 4.5 billion years, roughly equivalent to the estimated age of the planet.

As far as this writer knows, the government and military of the US have yet to offer any explanation as to how "conventional" weapons with a radioactive half-life do not constitute "dirty" weapons, that are prohibited under international laws governing the conduct of warfare.

It has been argued by Leuren Moret, an internationally recognized expert on the effects of DU and environmental commissioner for the city of Berkeley, CA, that the US has now conducted four illegal nuclear wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and twice in Iraq. Moret says that the Israeli army has also used DU against the people of Palestine. According to Moret and Dr. Durakovic, similar patterns of genetic mutations and congenital deformities have been observed in all of these countries. They have also been observed in children of U.S. and British soldiers, according to medical investigators and those brave veterans willing to tell their stories, as well as in civilian populations in areas where DU weapons are produced, stored and tested, says Moret. Arguably, DU is one of the main identifiable causes of birth defects in the world today.

One might think that in the face of such a crisis, humanitarian interests would prevail, and that governmental, philanthropic, charitable and other institutions and entities would all want to come together to try to develop a solution, or at least determine the extent of the problem. Sadly, this does not appear to be the case. Many allegedly humanitarian institutions and organizations are under the control of, or in some way beholden to, the very same corporate interests on whose behalf or at whose behest these illegal wars are waged. Therefore, as the rates of disease and deformity are mounting in certain parts of the world, for those in certain other parts of the world whose stated mission is to fight and prevent such conditions, it's "business as usual."

Let's look at one such "humanitarian" organization, the March of Dimes, and its response to the DU crisis. According to their website, the MOD, originally founded in 1938 to fight polio, has been funding research and educational programs to "save babies from birth defects, premature birth and low birthweight" since 1958. This 50-year history makes them the oldest charitable organization in the country, if not the world, dedicated specifically to preventing birth defects and other birth complications. What does the oldest, richest, best-known defender of babies' health have to say about the threat posed by depleted uranium? In a word, nothing.

> The March of Dimes provides far more information about the risks associated with peanuts than about the genotoxic and teratogenic properties of depleted uranium.

The word "uranium" doesn't even appear on their website. "Radiation" only appears in the context of radiation therapy or fleeting mentions as a "common cause for concern," but there is no information anywhere on the site about the types of birth defects or other health issues known to be associated with radiation exposure. Nor is there any information about common sources of radiation exposure, or how to avoid them.

In fact, the MOD provides far more information about the risks associated with peanuts than about the genotoxic and teratogenic (causing birth defects) properties of depleted uranium, or of any radioactive material.

The complete avoidance of any mention of birth defects connected with radiation exposure raises certain questions, beginning of course with, "Why?" Could it be for the same reason that the MOD is also suspiciously silent on the subject of dioxin, another known genotoxic and teratogenic substance? On-site searches for "dioxin" and "Agent Orange" both produce exactly zero results. Ironically, leaving the quotes off of the term "Agent Orange" returns over 600 links, mostly to pages containing references to insurance agents or orange juice.

> Certain types of deformities, many never before seen in Iraq, have become almost common.

Why hasn't the MOD called for a ban on the production and use of dioxin? Could it be for the same reason that almost 18 years of reports of birth defects possibly connected to DU haven't prompted them to even study the issue? Could it be that when the MOD says, "All babies deserve to be born healthy," that doesn't necessarily include babies in parts of the world where the U.S. wages illegal wars? But what about the children of U.S. soldiers, who are being born with similar types of deformities and other health problems as children in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine and Yugoslavia? Why doesn't the MOD use its considerable political and economic clout to encourage the U.S. government to tell the truth about DU and dioxin, or at least conduct honest investigations to determine what the truth is? Don't all babies deserve to be born healthy? Don't our soldiers, and their children, deserve better?

Apparently, the MOD would rather use its lobbying power (and your money) to push legislation such as the Mothers' and Newborns' Health Protection Act, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP), and the Birth Defects Prevention Act. Legislative efforts such as these, along with mandatory vaccinations and screening for certain conditions, have the effect of imposing unnecessary medical treatment upon every child born in this country; medicalizing and institutionalizing the birth process, and ultimately, every aspect of life; and eradicating our personal autonomy at the most fundamental level, especially for those of us with disabilities. All of this is being accomplished while generating unimaginable wealth for healthcare and insurance corporations, and increasing the political power of executives of those corporations who also serve in state and federal government.

Why does the MOD, which spends millions of dollars every year to study human genetics and learn about the causes of birth defects, have more to say about peanuts and orange juice than about dioxin and depleted uranium? More importantly, why does the MOD work so hard and spend so much money, donated to them in good faith, fighting perceived threats to the world they want to see, while ignoring real dangers and allowing so much suffering in the world that is?

Some possible answers to the questions raised here, along with a whole host of other questions about the MOD's intentions, present themselves with more thorough investigation of the MOD's history. We will explore that history, including the MOD's connections to Nazi Germany, and to the US military/medical/industrial complex and the national security establishment, in Part II. In the meantime, the MOD's annual fundraiser, the March for Babies, will be held on April 25. The Thurston County event will be at Olympia High School, 1302 North St SE, beginning at 8:30 am, with registration beginning at 7:30. This event is hosted by the South Sound chapter of the MOD. If you would like to sign up for the March, or contact this chapter for any reason, their phone number is (253) 752-9255.

David Griffiths has been described as an anarchist, antifascist, activist, advocate, and several other words beginning with "A." Send him your questions or comments at: world5.rising@yahoo.com.

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¡Un Pasó al Frente, Mauricio Funes Presidente!

by Caleb Hollatz

The streets in El Salvador have been filled with rivers of red before but this time, unlike the devastating years of the 1980´s, the color of red signifies hope and inspiration. Throughout the struggle of the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front), was brutal warfare, a resistance leading to the legitimization of the political party in 1992. With countless efforts to reform right wing policies through political processes, finally the presidential office has been added to the list of accomplishments of this party. For every Salvadoreño this recent election holds enormous meaning and important consequences.

For many people in El Salvador, the result is scary. The tidal wave of leftist governments washing over Latin America is a common theme widely portrayed in the local media, the right-wing ARENA government's party line, and statements made by power holders in the United States, all aligning the new president Mauricio Funes to the government of Chavez in Venezuela and the FARC in Colombia.

Although these allegations have been made by many, Funes maintains his strict platform that "integration with Central America and strengthening relations with the United States will be the priority of our foreign policy."

But for the slight majority, this victory represents a change in policy, more socialized public programs such as healthcare and education, a diversified economy (a return of the middle class), and more transparency in governmental debates. This change for Efrían Pérez, a former guerrilla and current museum guide in Perquin, is on the way. Although, he is skeptical about a government fixing all the problems of the people in El Salvador, he is filled with excitement for what is to come. "In 1980, we wanted to be heard, in 1992 we wanted to induce change through political processes, now we want the presidency," said Perez days before the election.

No doubt about it, this country is economically and socially polarized. With an election result of 51.3% to 48.7% it is quite apparent. Through governmental policies such as DR–CAFTA, a free trade agreement with the US, the standard of living for some has improved, for others it has drastically fallen. One example of how this has affected the already poor of El Salvador is seen in the movement of the campesinos, people working the land in the countryside. Many campesinos that once made a living producing various export crops have in the last few years been forced to move into larger cities to look for employment. Many have found it in modern-day sweatshops owned by international or multinational companies, others have joined the informal workforce selling anything from toothbrushes to medicine in the streets and busses. With the official currency being switched to the dollar in 2001, and the minimum wage set $.60 an hour, life for many is very difficult.

On March 15, people from all walks of Salvadoran life came out to be heard in great numbers and with immense conviction. Few problems were reported throughout the country, partially due to the presence of over 4,000 international election observers and also to the credit of observation lead by both parties. In San Jacinto, located in the center of San Salvador, the most common inaccuracies included deceased peoples on the lists of DUI numbers (identification cards used by voters), voters showing their marked ballots to others, and propaganda being sold outside of the polling place. Although many more cases of fraud were expected, only few serious issues arose. In the Estadio Flor Blanca Voting Center, international observers reported that a storage room which contained voting ballots was flooded in an assumed sabotage. In this Center, many Salvadorans who received their DUI cards in the US were to vote. On March 9, buses filled with Nicaraguans and Hondurans were reportedly in Antiguo Cuscatlán, San Salvador receiving voter registration cards (DUI's). According to observers of FUNDASPAD, Salvadoran Foundation for Local Development and Democracy, when the bus passengers were approached, they hid and spoke with Nica and Honduran accents. A few other such cases throughout the country were reported.

Many people dressed for the ocassion, sporting their FMLN garb pridefully. (Photo by Caleb Hollatz)

In January, the municipality elections occurred revealing the first signs of an FMLN victory. With the country's 262 municipalities, the amount of ARENA municipal chairs dropped from 180 to 121 and the FMLN gained 19 seats for a total of 75. This outcome early in January set the stage for an intensive political campaign filled with half truths both in El Salvador and in the United States.

On March 11, only 4 days prior to the elections, five Congressmen spoke before the House of Representatives making threats against the Salvadoran people living in the United States. These threats included the revocation of the Salvadoran peoples´ immigration status and the prohibition of sending financial support to their families back home if the FMLN party was to be elected. "Those monies that are coming from here to there I am confident will be cut, and I hope the people of El Salvador are aware of that because it will have a tremendous impact on individuals and their economy," announced Rep. Dan Burton (R–IN). The following day these comments were plastered across the most popular of newspapers throughout El Salvador, a day after the political campaigns had been officially terminated, leaving the FMLN unable to publicly respond to this intimidation. Through the mobilization and a national "call-in" day of many solidarity groups and supporters, pressure was directed at Chairman of the House Committee of Foreign Affairs, Howard Berman (D–CA). Berman claimed that he was "...confident that neither [concern] will be affected by the outcome of the election, despite what some of [his] colleagues in Congress have said." Later that day Thomas Shannon, the top diplomat for Latin America of the State Department, confirmed this by declaring, "We are committed to free and fair elections in El Salvador.

"And we've also made it very clear that we will work with whomever the Salvadoran people elect." Despite these challenges, the people of El Salvador have in fact, elected for the first time ever an FMLN president.

Mauricio Funes, a former journalist, first became known to the public on television. He was a correspondent for both the local San Salvador news and CNN en Español. He apparently became politicized while reporting from encampments hillside, embedded with the leftist guerrillas in the 80´s. After the death of Shafik Handal, a former commander and presidential candidate, Mauricio Funes became the first candidate of the party without a military background. This new candidate and new politician, has diversified the FMLN vote which has ultimately resulted in a vastly more popular party. Some of Funes´ first words as the elected presidential candidate acted to ensure that the "ARENA will be respected and listened to," the change in language itself a change in Salvadoran politics.

Like any government, the FMLN party is faced with many difficult problems and will, and should, receive much criticism for their decisions. Only time will tell if this is the party of the people, but at the very least, the moment we live in now in El Salvador is certainly an historical one, and a time that offers, if nothing else, great hope for the future.

Caleb Hollatz was part of a delegation from Olympia who traveled to El Salvador to witness their recent elections.

For more information: go to www.elsalvador.com, www.cispes.org and http://www.nlcnet.org/campaigns/archive/elsalvador/CKMinimumwage2a.shtml.

In San Jacinto, voting booths filled quickly in the morning with many anxious voters. (Photo by Caleb Hollatz)

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The Olympia zeitgeist: A psychological analysis

by John Van Eenwyk

Part three

In Part One, we saw how images that become invested with meaning produce symbols that condition perception and behavior. In Part Two, we saw how the environment of Puget Sound generates three sets of symbols that underlie three sets of perceptions (reverence, hostility, or craving) and three sets of behaviors (preservation, destruction, or exploitation).

Now we'll look at how changes in symbols produce changes in perceptions and behaviors. Perhaps easiest to understand is how reverence/preservation becomes increasingly alerted as hostility/destruction teams with craving/exploitation. The urge to preserve is directly proportional to the urge to destroy. As the wood and water of Puget Sound disappear through removal and contamination, reverence/preservation rises up in alarm.

The juggernaut runs out of gas

It is the same for craving/exploitation, albeit for different reasons. They become prey to "addict's mentality." Research and life experience have confirmed that when supplies of a drug diminish, addicts use it faster. One would think they'd decrease their usage to preserve the supply. But they don't. Their craving becomes overwhelming and they use it up faster than normal.

Hostility/destruction is largely unaffected by environmental destruction. They never cared much for wood and water in the first place. A large flat-screen television on which they can watch the Discovery and Nature Channels keeps them as happy as clams (happier, actually, than the clams dying of pollution in Puget Sound).

They do, however, remain open for exploitation by craving/exploitation. All it takes is to convince them that reverence/preservation is a terrible threat. The dilemma that craving/exploitation faces is that hostility/destruction no longer fears what little remains of the environment. So what might activate their fear now? Serendipitously, it is the same thing that threatens craving/exploitation.

The juggernaut drills deeper

Craving/exploitation is addicted to development. As majestic forests disappear into the bank accounts of the wealthy, craving/exploitation needs other sources of sustenance. Thusly does any part of Puget Sound that has a view of what's left of the wilderness become prime real estate. Towering and majestic old-growth forests are replaced with sterile and lifeless high-rise buildings.

As megalopolis metastasizes through Everett, Seattle and Tacoma, Olympia becomes the last opportunity for exploitation. The isthmus, with its commanding view of the Olympic Mountains, lures developers like methamphetamine to addicts.

> Any part of Puget Sound that has a view of what's left of the wilderness becomes prime real estate.

Reverence/preservation infuriates craving/exploitation. How will downtown ever survive without view-blocking towers of steel and concrete? How will we ever compete with the malls if downtown cannot attract national brand outlets? Can the city survive on small, local, successful businesses? Who profits from those?

The Port of Olympia and the Olympia City Council rise to the bait. Seduced by outmoded symbols of a distant past, they cling desperately to the idea that the only thing of value is money. The Port hallucinates Olympia as a deep-water port, as if Seattle and Tacoma don't exist. It tries to ignore the adverse currents of Tacoma Narrows and the reefs of Nisqually Reach (that damn natural environment again) that dissuade all shippers except those who cut sweetheart deals with the Port from ever coming here.

No wonder the Port is insolvent. The City Council is no better. The Little Dictator and his minions are determined to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. Is Olympia's location as the Gateway to Puget Sound its most valuable asset? Then sell it! Put up high-rises to attract the wealthy! (note to City Council: they're already here. They live on waterfront estates). Who cares if that closes the gate? We'll all be rich!

The local newspaper epitomizes the folly. Its unqualified support for Port and Council completes the triumvirate of outmoded thinking that excoriates reverence/preservation. Its wealthy business interests far from Olympia weep softly as they lay off all the locals and watch shares of their stock plummet to 35 cents. No wonder it's going out of business.

The well runs dry

Perhaps the Port and Council should visit Chicago. Except for one short stretch of shoreline, all of Chicago's lakefront is a public park. When craving/exploitation persuaded the Chicago City Council to raise the height limits on that last stretch, developers threw up a wall of high-rises which gutted the surrounding neighborhoods. Shut out from the natural environment, homeowners moved out. Drug dealers and prostitutes moved in. A once-thriving middle class neighborhood rapidly deteriorated into a slum.

The blight of high-rise buildings along the waterfront in Olympia will accomplish the same. Be assured that craving/exploitation won't care. Developers always find greener fields somewhere else.

Only reverence/preservation will notice, for only they understand the real treasure of Olympia. Only they understand that development and preservation can coexist. Need high rises? Set them back from the shore. Want economic development? Make it local and sustainable. Looking for value? Maybe it's not measurable in money.

Symbols again

Where does that leave us? Must wealth and power always prevail?

Actually, no. Remember: when symbols change, so do attitudes and behaviors. Now, reverence/preservation is no longer the problem. It's the solution. Reverence/preservation is all that can rescue local interests from craving/exploitation.

And what about those local interests? Is everyone a member of one of the three groups? Or is there another group that we haven't yet described? Who might this fourth group be?

And what about hostility/destruction? Will they throw off the chains of their flat screen TV's when their neighborhoods deteriorate around them?

There seem to be a few wild cards in the deck. The game isn't over. Increases in vandalism and civil disobedience indicate a profound shift in the Olympia zeitgeist. Those who preoccupy themselves with yesterday's symbols are unlikely to notice. But for those who do feel the shift, it may just be a whole new ball game.

John Van Eenwyk is a clinical psychologist and a psychoanalyst in Olympia, and a priest at St. Benedict's Episcopal church in Lacey. He is the clinical director and founder of the International Trauma Treatment Program in Olympia.

Bread & Roses Advocacy Center closes its doors

WIP news services

The Bread and Roses Advocacy Center at 1009 4th Ave. closed its doors on March 27. Bread and Roses is a 501c3 non-profit corporation and describes itself as "a project inspired by the radical nature of the Catholic Worker movement and founded in a strong love and respect for all fellow human beings" (*breadandrosesoly.blogspot.com*). Bread and Roses staff operated a Women's Guest House to help women get off the streets and back into the community and have provided a wide range of support services and assistance to the marginalized poor and homeless population of Thurston County.

The non-profit corporate status allowed Bread and Roses to operate the Advocacy Center with grant funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), but the status and its attendant corporate structure may not have meshed well with the non-hierarchical, ideological nature of an organization inspired by the Catholic Worker movement.

The Center's closure appears to have been driven primarily by the organization's failure to renew the HUD grant application, but *Works in Progress* was told strained relations with landlord Andrew Lynch may have also played a part in the closure. Former Board President Ruth Shearer is reported in a local news outlet (*The Olympian*, a local newspaper that is experiencing its own concerns about the future) to have said that staff had not provided her with the information needed to apply for the grant renewal. Former Advocacy Center staff reported to *Works in Progress* (WIP) that Ms. Shearer made the decision to stop gathering the information needed to continue the grant funding.

Ms. Shearer and other board members are now gone and a newly constituted Board of Directors is in place and working with other local groups to continue providing services to the people who were receiving help at the Advocacy Center.

The future of the Women's Guest House is uncertain. New Board President and former City Councilmember Matthew Green has said other Bread and Roses services would not change through the Advocacy Center closing.

Green also stated that three staff members will be released from employment as the Advocacy Center closes.

Former Advocacy Center staff are reporting to WIP that the current residents of the Women's Guest House will be allowed to stay in the transitional housing but that no new guests will be moving in and available beds will stay empty. The guest house is currently home to eight single women and two women with children. Former staff also reported to WIP that Bread and Roses planned to continue operating advocacy services as a street outreach program with HUD funding through July, but that funding has now been withdrawn and advocacy services will no longer be available.

Several groups are currently exploring the possibility of forming new organizations to continue advocacy and support services outside the Bread and Roses structure.

Former staff also reported a proposal was made to essentially transform Bread and Roses from a non-profit corporation to a private foundation. The Family Support Center at 108 State Ave NW and the Capital Clubhouse at 618 7th Ave SE in Olympia are reported to be working with Bread and Roses to continue providing assistance to people who were previously receiving help at the Advocacy Center.

This is not the first time that Bread and Roses has undergone this kind of metamorphosis.

In 2003 Bread and Roses closed in its incarnation as a soup kitchen and drop-in center on Cherry Street and re-opened at the Fourth Avenue location as the Advocacy Center.

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Anti-war activists file lawsuit over arrests at Port of Tacoma

Press Release

On March 6, 2009, three activists filed a lawsuit against the City of Tacoma for false arrest and other violations committed by Tacoma police during an anti-war demonstration. Elizabeth Rivera Goldstein, Thomas McCarthy, and Phan Nguyen were arrested under the pretext of wearing backpacks in a "no-backpack zone" at the Port of Tacoma in March 2007.

The activists had been demonstrating against the Iraq "troop surge" and the expedited deployment of the 4th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division to Iraq from Ft. Lewis. For two weeks in March 2007, the Port of Tacoma was the focal point for demonstrations against the deployment, as Stryker vehicles were being shipped out through the Port of Tacoma in advance of the 4th Brigade's actual deployment.

During this time, Tacoma police established a fenced-in "free speech zone" in the Port of Tacoma where demonstrators were compelled to congregate. Police set up random checkpoints to prevent the demonstrators from entering the "free speech zone" with backpacks and purses. The checkpoints appeared arbitrarily at varying locations and at various times throughout the protests. At times, the restrictions were arbitrarily applied to backpacks, purses, bags, buckets, boxes and even plastic water bottles. All restrictions were established without probable cause.

Thomas McCarthy was arrested on the night of March 9, 2007 while attempting to carry a backpack with food and medical supplies into the "free speech zone." Elizabeth Rivera Goldstein and Phan Nguyen were arrested along with six other demonstrators on March 11, 2007 for wearing backpacks into the "free speech zone." Goldstein's backpack contained a teddy bear, while Nguyen's "frontpack" contained a copy of the United States Constitution.

Because there is no law prohibiting bags at political assemblies, the city charged the activists with "Disobeying an Officer" under RCW 46.61.015—a traffic offense. However, the defendants were arrested on a public sidewalk by police who were not regulating traffic. "It's a good thing I wasn't walking down the sidewalk drunk," says Nguyen, "or they probably would have charged me with DUI."

The cases were dismissed in Tacoma Municipal Court, and the dismissals were affirmed in Superior Court after the city appealed the decision. The criminal court process concluded in Sept. 2008. "We spent one-and-a-half years in court arguing for the most basic rights that every child learns about in grade school," says Nguyen, who represented himself during the criminal court process, while Goldstein and McCarthy were represented by Attorney Larry Hildes. Hildes is representing all three in the lawsuit and has indicated that more plaintiffs may join in.

"These arrests were part of a systematic attempt by the Tacoma Police to prevent the demonstrations from occurring and to be so repressive and brutal that the plaintiffs and others would just give up and abandon their First Amendment rights," Hildes said. "They treated peaceful demonstrators like terrorists very deliberately and systematically. That is unacceptable and illegal."

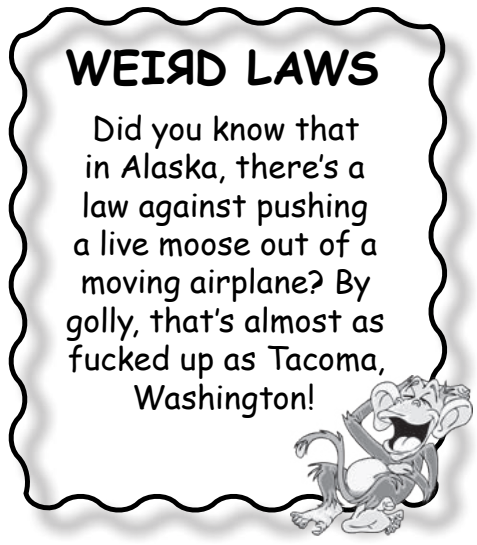
Hildes had won a similar case concerning a backpack at a demonstration in *Graves v. Coeur D'Alene* (9th Circuit Court, 2001).

The present complaint asserts that the plaintiffs were subjected to several violations by the City of Tacoma, including violations of civil rights, false arrest, false imprisonment, and malicious prosecution. They were deprived of several rights under the US Constitution, including deprivation of their 1st, 4th, 5th, 8th, and 14th Amendment rights.

By filing the complaint, the activists hope to force the City of Tacoma to forgo illegal repression against constitutionally protected activity, including but not limited to the arbitrary repression of antiwar protests. "We can never allow our local governments to undermine the US Constitution and our First Amendment rights," said McCarthy.

"The Tacoma police went beyond their mandate by issuing arbitrary and unlawful orders," added Nguyen. "They sought to regulate free speech by deciding where we could exercise our rights and what we could and couldn't wear while doing so. The Tacoma police are not the fashion police."

Other than wearing his backpack the wrong way, what law could he be breaking? Port of Tacoma, March 11, 2007. (Photo by Carrie Lybecker)


WEIRD LAWS
Did you know that in Alaska, there's a law against pushing a live moose out of a moving airplane? By golly, that's almost as fucked up as Tacoma, Washington!

OLYMPIA PMR WILL BLOCK SHIPMENTS TO AFGHANISTAN

Press release

"As long as US military attacks continue against the people of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, we will continue to block military equipment from moving through our public port." – Olympia Port Militarization Resistance

With the announcement of President Obama's plans to escalate the US war in Afghanistan, Olympia Port Militarization Resistance gathered to affirm its commitment to engage in nonviolent civil resistance in order to block military shipments from moving through the Port of Olympia. Previously OlyPMR was focused on blocking shipments to Iraq, but now recognizes the importance of blocking shipments destined for Afghanistan and Pakistan as well. Subsequently, the revised OlyPMR mission statement reads:

"The goal of Olympia Port Militarization Resistance is to end our community's participation in imperialist wars and occupations abroad, including Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, by stopping the US Military's use of the Port of Olympia."

Within five days of the President's announcement, a coalition of dozens of grassroots groups around the country quickly organized a campaign demanding congressional hearings on Afghanistan. But in the South Puget Sound region of Washington State, many antiwar activists are convinced that demands alone are insufficient.

Deployments of three Stryker Brigade Combat Teams, based at Ft. Lewis, are scheduled for later this year. One deployment is destined for Afghanistan, while the other two will be deployed to Iraq. In anticipation of the equipment being shipped through regional ports, a concerted campaign of resistance has been formulated.

OlyPMR was formed in May 2006 when – after two years of reliance upon more traditional expressions of opposition to the war shipments – local citizens decided to employ tactics involving more direct forms of action, such as using human blockades to stop convoys of Stryker vehicles and other equipment. Since May 2006, there have been 155 arrests related to attempts to stop military shipments from nearby Ft. Lewis through the ports of Olympia, Tacoma, and Aberdeen – gaining national and international attention.

Just as the US invaded and occupied Iraq under false pretenses, the 9/11 attacks have been used as a pretext in the pursuit of US domination in Afghanistan and Pakistan. History has illustrated that interventions in the region have brought disastrous consequences. In the context of a struggling economy, domestic crises, soaring deficits fed by war spending, and ever rising numbers of war dead, a significant military escalation would likely prove catastrophic.

On March 18, 2009, the eve of the six-year anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq, OlyPMR issued this statement:

"As long as US military attacks continue against the people of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, we will continue to block military equipment from moving through our public port. Olympia Port Militarization Resistance calls for people everywhere to find the ways that their own communities participate in these wars, and join together to creatively resist that participation.

"We must respect the sovereignty of other peoples and recognize that US intervention is a primary source of ongoing human suffering in these countries. Resources currently allocated for such imperial endeavors must be redirected toward urgent domestic needs. These realities should guide our understanding as we build a just and sustainable society at home and better relationships abroad."

For information about the most recent PMR campaign at the Port of Olympia, see the December 2007 issue of Works in Progress at www.olywip.org.

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Too long have the workers of the world waited for some Moses to lead them out of bondage. He has not come; he will never come. I would not lead you out if I could; for if you could be led out, you could be led back again. I would have you make up your minds that there is nothing you cannot do for yourselves.

Eugene Debs, speaking for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) on 12/10/1905.

Olympia Local
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO